

A D V I C E  
FROM A  
Dissenter in the City,  
TO HIS  
**Friends in the Countrey.**

Shewing it to be their DUTY and  
SAFETY, to Concur with those who  
are for ABOLISHING

THE  
PENAL LAWS  
AND  
TESTS.

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ADVICE

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FINAL ADVIS

AND

TESTS

Printed by J. B. Nichols, 10, St. Martin's Lane, London, W.C.2.

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hearkened to the Suggestions of the Church against you?

Did ever the Church make a Canon, in your favour, and hath not His Majesty Emitted a Declaration for your Ease?

Did ever the Church Rescue you out of the Hand of the Civil Magistrate? And hath not His Majesty Rescued you out of the Hands of the Church?

Tender-hearted Mothers, use to plead in behalf of their Children, when their Father is threatening; and Rescue them out of his Hands when he is correcting: But instead of so doing, the Church endeavoured your Ruine, and flees on His Majesty's Face for preventing it.

Hath not His Majesty given good Evidence, that He is a compassionate Father, and the Church Demonstrated her self an Unnatural Mother?

Will you then believe the Reproaches of her, from whom you never found Favour, and distrust the Promises of Him who hath shewed you so much Love? Are you not sensible, how falsely and maliciously they accused you to His Majesty? And will you believe them now, when they accuse His Majesty to you? Was it not their End then, to Exclude you from His Majesty's Favour, and is not the same Design now carried on?

Alas, but says the Church, *We were put upon the Persecution by the Courts. We did not engage in it voluntarily.* Enquire of them, if King Edward the 6th. put them upon Opposing His Dispensation to Bishop Hooper; and how they will Reconcile that, and their Concurrence with Him, in disposing of the Crown by His Will, which was, perhaps, the most Stupendious piece of Arbitrary Power, ever assumed by a Sovereign; and yet, they not only concurred with Him in it, but put Him upon it, which makes it evident, that they always joyned with the Prerogative in its height, except when favourable to Dissenters, and then they opposed it. Enquire, if King Charles the II. put them upon opposing His several Declarations for Liberty of Conscience in May and October, 1660. July 1661. and December, 1662. Repeated so often, that it may be evident His Majesty intended to fulfil the same, if they had not hindered him; which yet appears further, if you consider His Words in Declaration 25. October 1660. That No man shall be Disqualified or called in Question for Differences of Opinion in Matters of Religion, which do not disturb the Peace of the Kingdom; And if

any have been Disturbed in that kind, since our Arrival here, it hath not Proceeded from any Directions of Ours.

Enquire at them further, who puts them upon Opposing His present Majesty's Declaration for Liberty; And if they were so obedient to the Court in Persecuting, why do they not testify their Obedience now, when the Court Commands them to throw away the Instruments of their Persecution? And you will find, the case is so plain, that we may reasonably conclude, that if His Majesty was at any time displeased with us, they stirred Him up to Persecute, by their Misrepresentations, who accused us as Disloyal and Seditious, and not fit to be Tolerated.

Do they not justify their Rigour against us, by Alledging the same to be a Retaliation for what we did against them in the late Times? Can any thing be more Disingenuous? Will they justify what they condemn? Did not they begin with Bishop Hooper, though the King opposed it? And Persecute their Brethren at *Frankfort*, when there was no Court to put them upon it? And continue the same in *Queen Elizabeths*, *King James*, and *King Charles the I.* Time, till they had so enraged the Nation, that they could no longer bear it; and yet they would insinuate, that they were not the first Aggressors.

Is it possible then, that you can be imposed upon by their Apologies, and pretences of Moderation? Let them produce Instances. Yet, they give you a famous one in their Apoogy, of their Moderation towards the *Papists* after *Queen Mary's* Persecution: But we are sure, Protestant Dissenters found none of it; they made cruel Laws against them, and put those Laws in Execution, even to Death it self; they need not tell us of their Moderation towards *Papists*; we always told them of their Partiality towards them, against whom they pretend now to be so zealous, to have the Penal Laws continued; perhaps, they have reserved the Dregs of the Cup for themselves, but they are like to be disappointed if that were their Design. But because they know we would not be such Fools to joyn in continuing them against our selves, they tell us, it is only to be a Curb upon the *Papists*; that they desire to have them continued; Credat Judæus Appellat: Let their former Carriage witness the Truth of this.

Think with your selves, what a Mercy it is, not to be under a necessity of complying with such

Worship

Worship as you thought, neither appointed by, nor acceptable to the Divine Majesty of God ; or else, endure all the Miseries, that invective and irreligious Men could afflict you with. What a Blessing is it not to be under an Obligation of owning such for your Ministers, as were imposed upon you, whom in your Conscience you did not believe called of Christ to that Work ; whose whole Practice from their Youth up, was Estranged from Piety ; whose Design in entering the Sacred Function, was no other, than such as men have in entering upon an ordinary Trade, to get a Livelihood ; whose way of entering into the Church, was by the Patrons Presentation, against which you have complained as Unscriptural ; he (as alas it happens too often) having no care of his own Soul, and therefore, very unfit to chuse a Pastor for the Souls of others ; all that he designed in it, being perhaps, to gratifie a Tenants Son, his own Chaplain ; or oblige a Recommending Friend, which you have always looked upon, as not coming in by the Door, but climbing up some other Way. The great Number of Scandalous and Ignorant Preachers, shows also how remits they have been, who were intrusted to Examine their Qualifications ; that as to often it happens, being the Province of Domestic Chaplains, who concert the Matter with the Trustees, over a Glass of Wine ; and thus he becomes a Minister to have a care of Souls, who never took any of his own ; and he must be intrusted with Spiritual Affairs, when you would not trust with the over-sight of your Temporal.

These, and many other, though not chargeable upon all of the Church, yet are too well known to be Spots in the Church, and stand in need of Reformation. Can you then believe, either the Flatteries or Reproaches of such a Generation of men, who so tenaciously adhere to these things, which they confess to be so where commanded, and yet persecute others with the utmost Severity for their Non-compliance ?

And have you forgot, how at the same time, when the Flood of Persecution overflowed you, a Deluge of Impiety overflowed the Nation, and few, or very faint endeavours used by the Church, to oppose the same ? No, *Majus Opus Morebatur*, they had a greater Work to do ; they were to taken up in Persecuting those of tender Consciences, that they had no leisure to look after them, who made Shipwrack of good Consciences : They were so busie to disperse the Meetings of those who seriously sought God, that they could not

Animadvert to those that Blasphemed the Name of God ; They were so taken up in searching for Conventicles, that they could not punish the Revels, in Taverns and Bawdy-Houses : They were so eager to hinder us from Worshipping God on the Sabbath, that they could not look after those, who did shamefully Prophane that day : They were so zealously employed in forcing Obedience to the Doctrines Commandments, and Traditions of men, that they had no leisure to press Obedience to the Commands of God : And yet these Men, at this time, would have themselves looked upon, as the only Champions of Religion : But, O my Soul ! Come not thou into these their Sects ; unto their Assembly be not thou United : Cursed be their Anger, for it was fierce ; and their Wrath, for it was Cruel.

Do you think their present struggling for preserving Penal Laws, under pretence of Religion, can be sincere, when you consider the Conversation of many of them ? Do you think their pretended Tenderness is sincere, who refuse to Read the King's Declaration for Liberty to you ; but greedily swallowed down the Presentment of Grand Juries against you ? Do you think that they will consent to Abrogate the Penal Laws against you, which they have formerly said, were too easie and gentle for you ? Upon what Ground are you now induced to believe them, who have formerly entertained such Observations of them, viz. That such as had most Zeal for the Ceremonies, had least for the Substance ? Those who were most Zealous for Observation of Holy-days, least careful of keeping the Sabbath : Those who were most for Excommunicating Conscientious Dissenters, were most for Embracing Unconscientious Livers : Those who were eagrest to deliver others up to Satan, were the most usual Invokers of his Name. In a word, Those who were most for observing the Commands of Men, were least for observing the Commands of God : Those who were the most Prophane, were the most eager for putting the Penal Laws in Execution ; inasmuch, that it can be Instanced when, and where those Instruments of the Churches Bury, being in search for Dissenters ; and Apprehending others by Mistake, as soon as they heard them swear, dismissed them, with the Character of an Honest Man, and no Phanatick ; as if such Practices had been the Shibboleth of the Sons of the Church : Then as you regard your Religion, and would preserve the Credit of the Protestant Name, so much aspersed by the Practice of such ;

say,



say not a *Confederacy* to whom such say a *Confederacy*; and joyn not with the People of those Abominations, to keep up those *Wicked Laws*: But listen to the *Voice of God's Dispensations*, which call upon you aloud to joyn Heartily with those that are resolved to acquit themselves, and the Land, of this *GUILT*; lest you be Partakers of these *Sins*, and of the *Plagues* justly due for the same. Neglect not this favourable Providence which God hath put in your Hands, of ridding your selves from this Slavery; for a long Practice of such Courses Unrepented of, must needs Accelerate Divine Vengeance.

The Terms upon which you may be delivered from the Fury of those Men, are very easie, being only a willingness to shake off your Bonds; and that others may have a share in the same Liberty with your selves, which you cannot in Conscience, honour; nor Gratitude, deny; it being Consonant to the Rule of your Great Master, *to Do as you would be done by*; and due in Honour and Thankfulness to His Majesty, who so unexpectedly hath delivered you, who were Represented to Him as His greatest Enemies, out of the Mouth of the Lion, and out of the Paw of the Bear.

AY but say you, *The Church Upbraids us with concurring to procure a Liberty to Idolaters, who as soon as they find themselves in a Capacity, will Ruine us?*

Ans<sup>r</sup>. 1. Of all People in the World, it becomes the Church of England least to make such Reflections, whose Votes brought the Popish Lord into the House of Peers, to Answer a Turn, which now is made the great Danger they so labour to possess the Nation with the fear of, if the *Parliamentary Test* be taken off: And is it not as reasonable for us to conclude, that the Popish Lords, will be True to their Interest now, as they supposed they would be then, and consequently Adhere to such Laws as shall be made to Secure themselves and others against the Violences of an *Ungrateful Church*, who after they had done her such Service, threw them out again by their *Act of Uniformity*.

2. Have they not many times pronounced it from their Pulpits, *That they would rather join with the Papists, than the Presbyterians*? And though there is not the least Inclinations in either of these to join with the other, except in what concerns their common Safety; how can they for shame, who have used such Expressions, Upbraid us with it?

3. Whence comes this so sudden and vehement Zeal in the Church of England, against the Church of Rome, whose Symphony in Rituals, and Exterior Form of Worship, was made use of by Secretary *Walsingham*, to prevent Queen *Elizabeth's* Excommunication by the Pope; and whose advances thitherward, have been observable this many years, (though now their Irreconcilable Interest makes them Halt and Clamour,) as long since observed by *Dr. Du Moulin*.

4. How can they look upon the Ordination of that Church, which they esteem Idolatrous, as Valid, and yet disapprove of Presbyterian and others Ordination? And in so doing (though they charge others hotly as Schismatics) make themselves such from all the Reformed Churches.

6. Why did they not put the Laws in Execution against them, when it was in their power? Have they not thereby, according to their own Principles incurred, at least the Guilt of Idolatry? How many Presentments of their Grand Juries and Orders from their Bishops, to put the Laws in Execution against them, can they produce? Or when did they complain, that the Laws were too Gentle and Easie for them, as they have done against us?

6. Why did they Persecute us with more Rigour, and permit such whom they accounted Idolaters, and now by continuing those Penal Laws and Tests, put us under a necessity to join with them to secure our own and their Liberty; and at the same time Reproach us for it, though they pretend now to be for Moderation?

7. Where do they find it Prescribed by Christ or the Apostles, to Punish any of a different Religion, as such? Did ever our Saviour or his Apostles require the help of Magistrates, to make Penal and Sanguinary Laws, to force People to the Communion of the Church? Or, did they leave any Injunction to do so, when the Magistrate should become Christian? Was not their way of making Proselytes, by Preaching, and not Prisoning; Healing, and not Wounding; Caring, and not Killing; Reasoning, not Ruining; Argument, and not Torment; his Command was, *To take up the Cross and follow him*; but not to lay it upon others backs that would not stoop thereunto; 'tis our Duty to keep our selves from Idols, though we are not to fall foul upon Idolaters. The Apostle declares, that the Weapons of our Warfare are not Carnal; but I am sure Dissenters have found the Churches Weapons such.

8. Where

8. Where do they find that ever Christ or his Apostles made use of such Instruments to press People to their Communion, as they have done? I do not remember any mention of Proctors, Apparitors, and Informers; nor of Booted Apostles, Armed with Weapons of Cruelty, as some of their Brethren of the Clergy were; and who obtained from the Magistrates, as *Saul* did from the *Sanbedrim*, Authority to hale Men, Women and Children to Prison, that would not conform to their Church, which had no other effect, but to strengthen the People in their Dissent, who Argued thus: Can that be the Church of Christ, which acts so unlike Him; He commanded us to Love, Forbear, and Forgive one another; and said, *By this shall men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye Love one another*; and behold they Persecute to Banishment, Confiscation of Goods, and Death it self, for Non-conformity, to such things as they themselves grant he never commanded. Can these be the Successors of the Apostles, who declared the Weapons of their Warfare not to be Carnal? And lo, they came against us, as against Thieves, with Swords and Staves. Can these be Christians, who find our peaceable Assembling of our selves, for Worshiping of God, to be Riots, and yet use no censure against those that are really such? Can that be the Church of Christ, which makes use of such Anti-Christian Instruments, as Perjured Informers, Debauched, Swearing Proctors and Apparitors? Surely, if we may guess at their Design by their Practices, they have a mind to drive us to Hell, not to Heaven; for we cannot believe such men will lead us in a better way, than they walk in themselves. Thus do men discover their Nakedness, when possessed with that furious Spirit of Persecution, which drives them headlong into such absurd Practices.

As for the other part of the Objection, *That when the Romanists find themselves in a Capacity, they will Ruine us,*

*Ans.* 1. There is no probability that ever they should equal us for number, or in that respect, be any ways capable of working our Ruine; the very attempting whereof, by Violence, will infallibly issue in their own.

2. It is as improbable, that ever they should be able to do the same by Law, except the present Penal Laws remain in force, and then we know who have been their Tools hitherto; even the present Struglers for the continuance of these Laws; and are as likely to be their Tools in time to come, to work our Ruine,

3. We have his Majesty's Wisdom, and that of a Parliament to rely on, for finding out expedients to secure us; and why the breach of such Laws, as shall be made for Establishing Liberty of Conscience, may not be attended with, as dangerous, or more fatal Consequences to the Romanists, as acting contrary to the present Laws, no man can Divine; and certainly, if you choose such men for your Representatives, as have any Conscience themselves, they will take care that it shall not be safe (if possible) for any party afterward to invade the Liberty of Conscience to be Established.

For it is not to be supposed, as some maliciously suggest by impertinent Queries, viz. That such Laws as shall be made for securing Liberty of Conscience, will be without Penalties, which would indeed make them not able to answer the End: But the Wisdom of the Nation is to be trusted to Annex such Penalties for enforcing them, that whoever attempts to violate the same, though it were even by Propositions in either House of Parliament, may thereby be Ruined: Which doth sufficiently answer the great Objection, *That if Penal Laws and Tests were removed, the Papists would be under no Awe to restrain them from such Methods, as they think best, to make theirs the National Religion*; for that they cannot do without invading the Liberty of others; and consequently, rendering themselves Obnoxious to the Penalties of the Law, and Resentments of all Protestants, who will be sure to deal with them in that case, as Enemies to Humane Concord.

But you will say, *What avails Laws, so long as His Majesty has a power to Dispense with them?*

*Ans.* That Argues as much, and more against the present Laws, which are admired as an Impregnable Bulwark, than against such Laws as shall be made by his Majesty's Consent, and Act of his own Good Will; which for those very reasons, will be more binding upon him, than those of another making; and consequently, not the same reason for dispensing with them; nor will it be so easie to dispencc with the Breach of such Laws, as secure every ones Birth-right, as with the Breach of such as deprive them of the same; which is the present case; the best at least, if not greatest part of Protestants concurring with the one; but they will all unanimously oppose the other; but that which is yet more, there have been proposals Printed with Allowance, That His Majesty reserving all the other Rights of His Prerogative Inviolable, may Renounce the only Right of Dispensing

with

with this Law, or of Pardoning any Transgressor of it in any case whatsoever. And the same hath never been contradicted by the Court: The *Third Letter tending to demonstrate the Security of this Nation against Persecution, &c.*

In the next place Consider, how often you have poured out *Prayers and Tears* before God, to grant you a Liberty; and how you will be able to answer to him, if you do not concur with this Opportunity which he hath put in your Hands, of having the same *Establish'd by Law*: Do but think, how your Brethren who have been Exposed to Impoverishment, Imprisonment, Banishment, yea, Death it self, for want of such a Liberty, would have valued it; yea, at what Rate you your selves some years ago, would have purchased it, when you could not, without manifest Hazzard to your selves and Ministers, meet together to worship God according to your Conscience; think on it; how then you used to be interrupted in your Worship; by Ruffianly Train-bands and others; and how in the midst of your Prayers, they would pour out their horrid Oaths and Execrations, hale you to Prison, abuse the Women, vent their Rage against your very Pews, and carry themselves like so many *Savages*. Consider how your Houses used to be Riffed, and your Goods Seized; your Family frightened, and made an Object of Gazing to all the Neighbourhood, upon the Oath of a Perjured beggarly Informer: And how in an Instant, though in a Flourishing Condition, you were Reduced to Beggary; having neither a Bed to lye on, nor Bitt to put in your own Mouth, or those of your Tender Wife and Dear Children, all in Tears about you: And all this for Nonconformity to such things, as your Persecuters themselves ac-

knowledge to be indifferent, and which you reckoned absolutely Unlawful: Do but think how some have been treated on their Death-Bed, who could not have the Comfort of Christian Friends to assist them with their Prayers and Conferences; yea, or to visit them in a Neighbourly Manner, without having a Conventicle sworn against them, the Bed in hazzard of being pulled from under them; and being disturbed by the Barbarities of ungodly Men, when they were wrestling with the Pangs of Death. Yea, the Informing Trade was grown to such a height, that some *Dissenters* could not have the Respects paid them, due from their own Children, when married into other Families, but had Meetings sworn against them; and this is the Churches Moderation. Can you then be perswaded of the Sincerity of these men, who have yet given no signs of their Repentance, but rather justify their Practices? All their Arguments to prove their Moderation, are but such *Sophisms* as his, that would undertake to prove there was no such thing as Motion, but was answered roundly by one in the Company, who rose up and walked before him: Do but consult your own Sences, and you will be sufficiently able to answer them, that you know the Instruments of Cruelty are in their *Habitations*.

In the last place, consider how little Peace you will have to reflect upon it, if you lose your present Liberty, and be Reduced to the former Miseries, upon believing the *LIES* of a Generation; whom you could never hitherto credit; and for denying a share in the same Liberty to others, so agreeable to the Practice of other Protestant Countries; and Consonant to the Divine Command, of *Doing as you would be done to.*

F I N I S.